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CBC Newsletter

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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

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Number 3

Fall Migration in Hickory! CBC Fall Meeting to be held September 25-27

Dwayne Martin

The last spring migrants are winging their way north now, but it will not be long before legions of fall migrants begin flying south. From the trickle of shorebirds that begin to appear on mudflats in July and August, to the waves of warblers, vireos, and flycatchers that push through the area in September and October, fall migration is indeed an exciting time for birders.

While migration can be entertaining anywhere in the Carolinas during the fall, migrants seem to like following the highlands of the Appalachians south toward warmer climes. Accordingly, a trip to the mountains and adjacent foothills during this time of year can be quite rewarding. In order to enjoy "nature's bounty" of fall migrants, the Carolina Bird Club is offering a fall meeting in Hickory, NC September 25-27.

This will be the second time the CBC meeting has been in Hickory since 2003. Some 124 species of birds were seen during the last Hickory meeting, including sought after species such as Black-billed Cuckoo, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Nashville Warbler, and Red Crossbill. Who knows what will make a splash this year!

There are several new spots for us to visit this time such as the Lenoir Greenway (very good for fall migrants) and several new parks in and around Catawba County. There will be lots of trips to local hotspots for fall migrants such as the Hickory City Parks, as

well as Riverbend and Bakers Mountain Parks. We will also be having at least one trip up to Ridge Junction Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway (somewhat famous now for the ease of seeing hundreds of migrants).

Our speaker for the Friday night meeting will be Curtis Smalling from North Carolina Audubon. He will be talking to us about their work with Golden-winged Warblers. Our Saturday night speaker will be Susan Campbell. Susan will be speaking to us about her ten-plus years as a hummingbird researcher here in North Carolina.

Our headquarters for the meeting will be the Park Inn Gateway Conference Center at 909 US Hwy 70 SW, Hickory, NC 28602. The phone number for reservations is 1-800-789-0686 or 828-328-5101. The rate will be \$68.00 plus tax. Please let them know you are attending the CBC meeting. Note that the Park Inn's rooms are all non-smoking. Rooms feature hairdryers and coffee makers.

We will be having a buffet dinner on Saturday night. More details about that will be in the next newsletter.

Fall migration is a wonderful time of year, especially in the foothills. Please make plans to attend the fall meeting in Hickory. A fun time will be had by all!

The CBC visits the CBBT

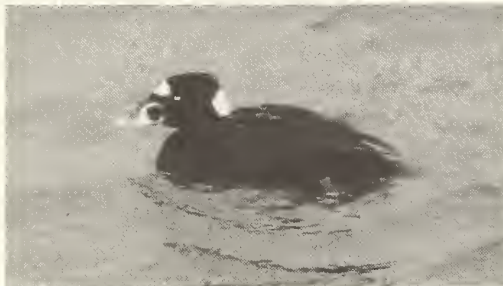
...or a Tale of Foul Weather and Fowl Friends

Steve Shultz

Twenty-seven members of the Carolina Bird Club braved unfavorable weather and tallied 71 species of birds during the February 28, 2009 field trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) and nearby areas on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

While poor weather can produce good sightings, especially along the coast, Saturday's forecast for up to two inches of rain, 15-20 knot northeast winds, and temperatures hovering in the upper 30's (with associated wind chills well below freezing) seemed daunting. Nonetheless, all 27 registered participants arrived bright and early (well, early anyway... the overcast made for "diffused light" at best) to begin a day-long search for sea ducks, shorebirds, gulls, and whatever else might turn up.

The CBBT is well known as an excellent location for viewing sea ducks, especially scoters and Long-tailed Ducks. While numbers vary from year to year, one can normally expect to find all three species of scoter, with Surf being the most common followed by Black and White-winged. White-winged can sometimes be a bit of a challenge as numbers are usually much lower than the other two, and such was the case this visit. We found large numbers of Surf Scoter surrounding islands #2 and #4, providing participants with an opportunity to see males, females, and 1st year birds. Smaller numbers of Black Scoters, especially around island #4, were available for comparison. We only managed two White-winged Scoters, both hens. Long-tailed Ducks made an impressive showing with birds around all four islands, and one flock of at least 75 near Surf Scoter island #3. Two female Common Goldeneye made an appearance on island #4, and somewhat surprising for the location, were sightings of Green-winged Teal and American Wigeon.



A few participants got looks at a Red-necked Grebe, but viewing this bird in the choppy seas while bracing against the fresh breeze proved



challenging. Possibly due to the strong winds, the normally common Great Cormorant was nowhere to be found, but a number of Purple Sandpipers on each of the islands were expected and enjoyed.

Participants enjoyed watching a number of Harbor Seals frolicking in the rough waters just off islands #1 and #3, and fans of naval hardware had the opportunity to watch as the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier *Harry S. Truman* passed between islands #1 and #2 on the way back into port after a shakedown cruise.

By lunchtime we had moved off the bridge-tunnel and onto the Eastern Shore of Virginia for some birding in the Cape Charles area. The rain that held off for our visit to the tunnel islands came in about noon and stayed as a constant companion for the rest of the day. While a steady rain coupled with 39 degrees makes for difficult birding, we tried to make the best of the afternoon, stopping mainly at locations that provided access to the bay where scanning for species missed earlier in the day was possible. A stop at the end of Maggotha Road provided nice looks at a flock of Brant, both in flight and on the water, along with a quick look at Eurasian Collared-Doves at one of the few locations on the Eastern Shore for this species. The highlight of the afternoon was probably the surprise Eurasian Wigeon drake found with a small number of dabbling ducks at the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR.

All in all, a nice trip, although I would guess some would have preferred the water stay in the bay instead of falling from the sky! Look for an encore offering of this trip next January, probably to be extended into a two-day weekend trip.

Where Were you 10 Years Ago?

The May 1999 issue of the CBC Newsletter provided information on the following stories:

- The Carolina Bird Club had just concluded a successful spring meeting in Charlotte, NC. Presentations by David Wright on video documentation of unusual sightings in the Charlotte area, and a Saturday presentation by Marek Smith on Barn Owls in the Metrolina area capped a weekend of field trips. Judy Walker and Taylor Piephoff led the meeting coordination. Ten years later we welcome Taylor as the incoming President of the CBC!
- In what may be one of the most important and most discussed decisions in recent CBC history, the membership voted to pursue sale of the "Shuford Property" to the son of Helen Shuford. Ms. Shuford donated 82 acres near Tryon, NC to the CBC in memory of her husband Robert L. Shuford. By the end of the year the sale had been completed. The land was then placed under a conservation easement to ensure that it would remain a bird and wildlife sanctuary under the supervision of the Pacolet Land Trust and the Carolina Kids' Conservancy.
- Plans for the fall meeting in Charleston, SC were underway with Van Atkins of Charleston leading the planning.
- James H. Coman III, who recently passed away, provided insight on an attempted predation of lambs by Black Vultures at his farm in the northwestern mountains of NC.
- The CBC began offering grants to support student research in avian matters. The funds for the grants came from royalties resulting from the sale of the *Birds of the Carolinas* book.
- Len Pardue, Treasurer, reported that in 1998 the Club received \$27,423.96 in operating income and experienced \$28,309.65 in expenses, resulting in a small operating loss that was covered by the Club's cash reserves.
- New members to the Executive Committee included Len Pardue assuming the role of President, Patricia Tyndall replacing Len as Treasurer, Carroll Richard stepping up as Member-at-Large for SC, and John Wright accepting the position as Vice President for Eastern NC.

Incoming Executive Committee Members Elected at the Clemson Meeting

Please welcome the following members of the Carolina Bird Club Executive Committee. Elections for the positions noted below took place at the spring meeting in Clemson. The Executive Committee made two appointments to fill vacant positions.

President: Taylor Piephoff (Charlotte, NC)

First one-year term. Limited to two consecutive one-year terms.

SC Vice-President: Paul Serridge (Greenville)

Limited to one-three-year term.

Western NC Vice-President: Dwayne Martin (Hickory)

Appointed to complete Taylor Piephoff's term ending in 2010.

Secretary: Pru Williams (Hope Mills, NC)

Third consecutive one-year term. Limited to three consecutive one-year terms.

Treasurer: Carol Bowman (Southern Pines, NC)

Second consecutive one-year term. Limited to three consecutive one-year terms.

Western NC Member-at-large: Lucy Quintilliano (Charlotte)

Second consecutive two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

Western NC Member-at-large: Ron Clark (Kings Mountain)

Appointed to complete Dwayne Martin's term ending in 2010

Eastern NC Member-at-large: Skip Morgan (Manteo)

First two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

SC Member-at-large: Marion Clark (Lexington)

First two-year term. Limited to two consecutive two-year terms.



Did You Know?

The Bermuda Petrel was thought to be extinct for almost 300 years until its rediscovery in 1951.



A Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



A Guide to the Birds of East Africa

Nicholas Drayson

202 pages

ISBN 978-0-670-917570

Why on earth would the Carolina Bird Club Newsletter carry a review on the birds of East Africa? Is this a niche appeal to the probably less than half-dozen folks who are actually planning an upcoming trip to that exotic (and currently rather unsettled) locale? Is the author trying to show off his world-traveler credentials?

In this case the answer to both questions is “no”, for “A Guide to the Birds of East Africa” is not, as it might appear, actually a guide to birds in East Africa. Rather this is, and is noted on the cover as such, a novel. A novel with a nod to birds, birding, list keeping, competition and “twitching”, but also a story of politics, race relations, desire, and friendship.

I recently received a copy of Nicholas Drayson’s 2008 title as a gift. When I opened the wrapper and saw the title I thought: “Um, okay... quaint, but I’ll probably never use this book. I wonder how much I can return it for at the local brick and mortar?” Then I noticed it was a novel and decided to give it a try, and I am glad that I did, for this short, easy read is a delight.

The story follows a Mr. Malik, an expatriate from India living in Kenya. Relegated to a state of semi-retirement, Malik has taken up birding and enjoys weekly bird walks sponsored by the national museum.

Here he meets and becomes infatuated with Rose Mbikwa, trip leader and champion of change in notoriously corrupt Kenya. The social event of the year, the Hunt Club Ball, is approaching, and Mr. Malik plans to ask Rose to accompany him, but before he can do so, Harry Khan arrives. Harry, wealthy but with no real job, prefers the women of Kenya to the birds, and a stiff drink at a luxury bar to a wildlife safari. Harry also becomes enamored with Rose, but who should have the honor of asking her to the ball? How can this conflict between gentlemen be resolved? Why a competition of course, a whirlwind week in which to identify as many Kenyan birds as possible.

From mousebirds to flamingos, Hoopoes to Hadadas, Malik and Khan take two very different approaches to building a list of birds seen during the week. When a cyclone approaches the coast from the south the frantic rush is on to see what the winds blow in. But as is often the case, birding does not occur in a vacuum, and hostile Somalis, the Kenyan Defense Force, and marauding street thugs all play a part in the eventual result of the contest. Who wins? Why of course you’ll have to read the book yourself to find out, and I think you will be glad that you did.

While the birding competition is the thread that ties the multi-layered story together, the book is more about relationships, politics, government and personalities than birds, and is richer as a result. Add to this the often dry, British humor and the result is an enjoyable read worthy of attention.

RBA Discontinued

With the Internet taking an ever more central role in the broadcast of rare bird information, usage of the telephone-based Carolina Bird Club Rare Bird Alert (RBA) has decreased. Accordingly, the CBC Executive Committee made the decision to discontinue the RBA.

Birders are encouraged to keep up with sightings of rare birds in the Carolinas via the Carolinabirds e-mail list. Carolinabirds can be accessed either by free subscription or by viewing the most recent messages on

the Birding on the Net website at www.birdingonthe.net

To subscribe to Carolinabirds, send a plain-text message to “sympa@duke.edu”. The body of your message should contain only the words “subscribe carolinabirds”. More information on Carolinabirds, including how to unsubscribe or set your subscription to digest mode (where a single daily e-mail containing all of the day’s messages is sent) can be found at Will Cook’s website: <http://www.duke.edu/~cwcook/cbirds.html>





A Birder's Book Review

Gordon E. Howard



Adirondack Birding:

60 Great Places to Find Birds

John M.C. Preston & Gary N. Lee

224 pages

ISBN 978-0-9789254-3-7

If you are planning a trip north to find those species missing from your lists such as Bicknell's Thrush, Spruce Grouse, or other Boreal birds, you would benefit from and enjoy this book. Planning your trip is made easier by descriptions of sixty birding locations including the Magic Triangle, Wickham Marsh, Whiteface Mountain (the higher parts of which can be accessed by motor vehicle), Lyon Mountain, famous Ferd's Bog, or Massawepie Mire. There are so many choices, and all are well described. Your trip can be a tour de force of Adirondack birding sites, and can be researched from the comfort of your home or in the car on the drive north.

The book starts with a brief history of birding in the Adirondacks starting with the records of Pehr Kalm and covers the period from 1749 to the present. This history is well worth reading as it introduces birders to the region in a way that identification guides cannot.

Adirondack Birding contains the descriptions, locations, and expected avifauna of some sixty prime birding locations in the Adirondack Park area of northern New York state as well as some additional "bonus" sites. Adirondack Park was set aside beginning in 1888 as a protected forest preserve. Currently it includes most of the Adirondack Mountain Range and some of the surrounding foothills and lowlands, encompassing about six million acres of public and private lands. The numerous lakes, marshes, and bogs result from changes during the last glacial period, and provide birders with access to Boreal habitat not common in the contiguous United States.

The park is suffused with roads and towns, such as Lake Placid and Old Fort, that can be a base for exploration of the surrounding area. Travel between birding sites is relatively straightforward, and the standard

tourist amenities are available in numerous towns and villages.

The book is divided into five regions. Examples include the Eastern Region that includes the west shore of Lake Champlain and the Northern Region that is known as the "Boreal Belt". Some of the sites are easily accessible by car while others require some walking, mountain ascents, or canoeing/kayaking. Efficient hand-drawn maps by Matthew Paul provide an overview of each site and detail trailheads and walking paths. Many excellent photographs by Jeff Nadler enrich the text and whet the appetite of visiting birders. The Boreal Chickadee is my favorite! Note that this is not a bird identification guide, so visiting birders will want to bring along their favorite field-guide to supplement the information provided in Adirondack Birding.

The authors are long-time residents of the Adirondack Park and bring rich and varied experience to their writing. "Mike" Peterson (no relation to that famous birding Peterson) coordinated the data collection in northeastern New York for the state's two breeding bird atlases and is the founder of the Crown Point Bird Banding Station. Gary Lee spent thirty years in the central Adirondacks as a forest ranger for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. Each author contributes thirty of the sixty site accounts. The book's twin voices allow for the authors' individual styles to add color to the site accounts, and it is interesting to compare and contrast the two.

This book is not one of those that tells you which bush or copse of trees will have that rare northern woodpecker, but provides enough information on spatial distribution and habitat to allow birders to have a good idea what to expect and where to search for particular species.

If sales are any indication of quality, it is the book to have while birding in the Adirondacks. One book store in Glens Falls, New York reports that it has taken a solid place in their "Top Ten Sales" list. To me it is the "missing link" in bird books for this area.

Purple Martins

Steve Shultz



The Amazing Martin

Each year the Purple Martin undertakes an amazing journey. Leaving tropical wintering grounds in South America, the martins are drawn by an ancient urge to fly north. North through the narrows of Central America, across the Gulf of Mexico, or hop scotching across the Caribbean and then into the expanses of the United States and Canada, the martins are among the earliest of spring migrants. Some of the earliest birds, known as “scouts”, arrive on the Gulf Coast or in Florida in mid-January, the same time that Rusty Blackbirds are *arriving* on their wintering grounds!

Once the bulk of the martin population arrives in March through May, nesting occurs. In the east this happens mainly in man-made housing specifically erected to attract Purple Martins. In the southwest a race of martins has adapted to nesting in woodpecker holes in saguaro cactus. The adult martins build a nest in the selected cavity that will hold up to seven eggs, and eventually hatchlings. The female martin lays one egg each morning until her clutch is complete. After an incubation of about fifteen days, the young begin to hatch. This process can take up to two days, so the young in a particular nest may be at different stages of development depending on their “hatch order”. About thirty days after hatching, the young take flight for the first time.

After the young of the year fledge, the birds begin preparing for the up to 5,000 mile trip that will take them to the tropics of South America. Purple Martins form communal roosts, usually near water. Some of these roosts are spectacular in the number of birds involved. One of the largest in the eastern United States is right here in South Carolina! The famous Lake Murray roost may contain well over half a million martins!

South Carolina Purple Martin Color-Banding Project

Julie Hovis writes: “In 2008, 632 Purple Martin nestlings were color-banded at 13 colonies in central South Carolina as part of a 3-year project to monitor Purple Martin nesting success, movements, and colony-site fidelity. The project was funded, in part, by the Purple Martin Conservation Association (<http://www.purplemartin.org>). Nestlings were banded with a numbered aluminum band on the right

leg and a uniquely-coded color band on the left leg. The color band is yellow and has the letters “SC” printed sideways in black followed by the letter “A” and three numbers, also in black. To report a sighting of a color-banded Purple Martin, or for more information about the project, please contact Julie Hovis (jahovis333@aol.com; 803-236-1268) or Jim Beatson (beatsonj@FTC-i.net; 803-481-2095). Band reports should include as much of the following information as possible:

- Where the bird was observed (address and city)
- When the bird was observed (date and approximate time)
- The leg with the color band (left or right)
- The color of the band and the color of the printed letters and numbers
- What is printed on the band (for example: “SC A001”)
- Your name and contact information (phone and/or email)”

Threats

Purple Martins in the eastern United States rely heavily on human assistance in nesting as these birds almost exclusively utilize martin houses erected for their use. Many martin house owners diligently attempt to exclude non-martin nesters that attempt to usurp the gourds or martin “condos” erected to attract the martins. These interlopers include European Starlings and House Sparrows, both non-native species that are more than happy to take advantage of the provided nesting cavities.

Once martins leave the nesting colony and amass at the roost sites noted previously, they can be in danger due to interaction with humans. Some roost sites, such as the one in Dare County, NC, are on over water vehicular bridges, and passing traffic can inflict significant mortality. The congregation of thousands of birds can also lead to the birds being considered a nuisance by humans, who make take steps to evict the martins. Project MartinRoost is a program designed to locate and attempt to conserve Purple Martin roosts in North and South America. More information on Project MartinRoost can be found at www.purplemartin.org/roost or by calling 814-833-7656.

Celebrate the Art & Science of Birds at The NC Arboretum



The North Carolina Arboretum celebrates the art and science of birds with "H. Douglas Pratt and John C. Sill's BIRDS: The Science of Illustration," a new exhibit that runs through November 1, 2009 at The Baker Exhibit Center.

In conjunction with The North Carolina Arboretum's celebration as an official part of the NC Birding Trail, the exhibit explores how art and science work together in Pratt and Sill's artistic illustrations of birds.

Pratt is an ornithologist, artist, and photographer as well as the Research Curator of Birds at the NC State Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh. As a widely respected zoological illustrator, author and illustrator, Pratt has contributed to publications such as National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the multi-volume *Handbook of Birds of the World*.

Sill has worked as a freelance artist and illustrator since 1971 and has been exhibited in highly acclaimed shows and appeared in a number of books and magazines. He has been the illustrator for the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Bird Identification Calendar since the project began in 1980 and he is an instructor for the Institute for Field Ornithology sponsored by the American Birding Association.

"H. Douglas Pratt and John C. Sill's BIRDS: The Science of Illustration" runs through November 1 and is free for members or with parking admission (\$6 per personal vehicle).

The North Carolina Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Arboretum grounds are open 7 days a week. Property hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., November-March and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., April-October. The Baker Exhibit Center, Education Center and Bonsai Exhibition Garden are open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Parking Fees: \$6 per personal motor vehicle, \$25 commercial vans and \$45 tour buses. No parking fee applies for NC Arboretum Society members. All day Tuesday, parking is free for all visitors. For more information, call 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

The opinions expressed in the CBC Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Carolina Bird Club or its members, but are those of the authors who have contributed material. All CBC members are encouraged to submit content for publication. Submitted articles may be edited for style, content, or length prior to publication. Submissions may be made in electronic format to newsletter@carolinabirdclub.org, or by mail to the address on the back cover.

Welcome New Members!

The Carolina Bird Club extends a very warm welcome to our newest members. We hope you enjoy the offerings of the CBC and great birding in the Carolinas and beyond!

Jay Chandler, Jr.
Hemingway, SC

John Crowder
Kernersville, NC

Jeanine and Allen
Elster
Winston-Salem, NC

Verna Johnson
Calabash, NC

Marlene Konsek
Pawley's Island, SC

Valerie Morell
Corolla, NC

Nora Murdock
Bat Cave, NC

Liz Odum
Richburg, SC

David Weathers
Holly Hill, SC

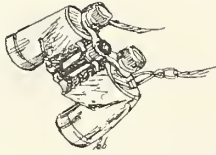
Ann Yeend
Weinrich
Lake Worth, FL

Deceased Member:

John Hardaway



Lynne Mattocks Lucas



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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Hickory, NC September 25-27, 2009
Coastal NC January 29-31, 2010
(Please note that the location for
the winter 2010 meeting has changed from
Beaufort, SC to coastal NC)



CBC Board Members

President, Taylor Piephoff
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piephofft@aol.com

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David McCloy, Southern Pines, NC
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Marion Clark, Lexington

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Website Editor, Kent Fiala, Hillsborough, NC

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Submission deadlines are due the 1st of January, March, May,
July, September, and November.

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